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ABSTRACT

This report discusses a program to present the Teacher Advisement Training Model. This model for training teacher-advisors is based on the assumption that tentative commitment to making school a more rewarding experience for all is the first step in starting an effective program. The approach is to help teachers learn specific skills and methods which have a high success probability, thereby resulting in positive reinforcement. The proposed teacher-advisor training program involves 40 to 50 hours of instruction. The skill learning involved in the program is broken down into three components: (1) relationship building, (2) assertion, and (3) group facilitation. The authors believe that additional benefits from such a program are: (1) transfer of the learning to the classroom, (2) closer relationships and cooperation among staff members in helping students and (3) student imitation of the teacher's positive ways of relating to each other. (Author/BW)

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TEACHER-ADVISORS: Where There's a Skill There's a Way

by

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TEACHER-ADVISORS: Where There's a Skill There's a Way

Overview of the Problem and Approach

From Mr. Chips to Lucas Tanner there is a romantic tradition about teachers taking a deep personal interest in their students and thereby exercising a strong positive influence on them. While such teachers do exist, there has been little attempt to develop any systematic way of helping teachers play important personal roles in the lives of their students. The authors believe that there are ways to help ordinary teachers develop the communication skills and motivation to be more effective advisors and teachers.

Recently a good deal of interest has developed in having teachers play more personal, advisor-type roles. The authors have worked with counselors from schools in Minnesota, Washington, Louisiana, Nebraska, Missouri, and Alberta, Canada; which have, or soon will have introduced a teacher-advisor program. Most often it is the responsibility of the school guidance staff to organize and administer these programs. Typical goals of such programs are to assist the student in adjustment to school and to life. It is often implied in the development of such programs that the teacher-advisor should get to know students and their families well, and should in some way assist student-advisees in developing healthy attitudes, values, and goals; in gaining the most out of their curricular experiences; in solving personal problems; and in fostering effective interpersonal relationships.

It has been the authors' observation that such programs, if skillfully introduced, may begin with considerable enthusiasm and then gradually taper off into management of administrative details such as rolltaking, checking absences, making referrals, and the like. There is a danger that they may end up much like the old "home room" function, but with the added burden of more clerical work. This may happen because of inadequate training and the lack of necessary skills to perform effectively at a deeper level in the teacher-advisor role, with the result that the initial commitment and enthusiasm begin to wither away.

The authors are proposing a model for preparing teachers in such a way that they not only can carry out the humane functions envisioned in the teacher-advisor plan, but that they are actually more likely to do so. What is needed to accomplish these ends? Initially teachers must somehow be sufficiently motivated to actually make a serious attempt to accomplish the purposes for which the program was established. Then they must have the necessary knowledge, skills, and techniques to carry out the teacher-advisor role successfully and in a manner that is satisfying.

It is one thing to ask teachers to "be concerned" -- it is another to provide them with the skills so that concern can express itself in effective ways. Here is where the counselor, and the counselor-educator, could be most helpful. They have a repertoire of skills and techniques which can be effectively used to accomplish the goals of the teacher-advisor program. Beginning such a program gives the counselor an opportunity to extend his role and humanizing influence

throughout the school. This "giving psychology away" has been advocated by many psychologist and counselor educators in recent years (Sprinthall, 1974; Pine, 1974; Carkhuff, 1957). The teacher-advisor program offers the counselor a reasonable and effective way to do just that.

Once the idea of a teacher-advisor plan has been introduced and tentative commitment or interest has been indicated, the present model proposes that deeper commitment and enthusiasm will develop as the training starts to pay off in effective relationships with students. There are several reasons for this approach.

First, when teachers develop confidence in their ability to use communications skills such as listening and responding empathically and asserting themselves calmly and confidently, they become more motivated to try using these skills. In addition, these efforts are usually strongly reinforced by positive student reactions. Further, as they learn to use these skills in the context of structured experiences, and as the students show interest in participating, the teachers develop deeper commitment to the program.

Second, the process of learning these skills and trying out these experiences is one in which the teachers themselves go through many kinds of activities which help them toward growth and self-fulfillment. In this process teachers develop a greater awareness of the need for and the value of helping students to become more fully functioning.

Third, these kinds of learning experiences bring teachers closer together in sharing feelings, concerns, and ideas, and that in turn can begin to

change the atmosphere of the school environment toward more focus on persons, human concerns, and sharing. As the environment begins to change, it makes the school a better place for students as well as teachers. This is a major goal of the teacher-advisor program. In addition, as teachers begin to focus more on student concerns and talk more about them, it becomes easier for a teacher to be a student advocate with another teacher.

Fourth, the same skills and methods used with students in the teacher-advisor role are now available for use in classes, which results in further movement toward humanizing the school.

It should be emphasized that these outcomes are not automatic--they must be nurtured by the methods used in conducting the teacher-advisor training. For example, just as the teachers learn effective group methods for involving students in meaningful discussions of their concerns or problems, the teachers themselves should be involved in the same way while discussing their concerns. This might include their anxiety or any negative feelings about the teacher-advisor program itself, or the training in which they are engaged. In other words, what is good for the healthy development of students is also good for the healthy development of teachers. Therefore, the methods used in training should always be based on a deep respect and caring for the teachers as human beings. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that, unless the modeling behavior of those conducting the education corresponds with the kind of behavior the teachers are being helped to learn in their relationships with students, the methods are not likely to prove effective.

Finally, it should be noted that it has been the authors' experience that the counselor who wishes to implement a teacher-advisor training program faces two major problems. First, the counselor's staff position within the school hierarchy does not usually give the counselor a strong authority role, and in many situations it may be difficult to assume the new role of staff developer. In this situation, it is helpful, and often essential, to enlist the support and active participation of the principal in the training program. The principal's support and participation in the program formally legitimatizes the counselor's role in staff development.

Secondly, the counselors who want to conduct teacher-advisor training may find that their own training did not prepare them to conduct the type of staff development suggested in the following model. One solution to this problem is to enlist the aid of a counselor education staff to help with the first round of training. After the counselors have completed the training sequence under the direction of a counselor educator, they may find that they are able to conduct the training on their own in the future.

Skill Learning: Relationship Building, Assertion, and Group Facilitation

This section deals with the kinds of skills teacher-advisors need to perform and how to learn them. These skill learning approaches involved five different experientially based packages. All five use small groups of 10 to 12 teachers, involve roleplaying, and require teachers to observe, judge, and comment on the skill attainment of their peers.

The first set includes the positive relationship building skills of micro-counseling (Ivey, 1971), empathy training (Carkhuff, 1969) and Interpersonal Process Recall (Kagan, 1972). It is essential that teacher advisors learn fully the complex skill of relationship building. These three training programs emphasize the processes of listening and responding, and the impact that advisors and advisees have upon each other. After they have become skilled in hearing and responding to others feelings, they are then ready for assertive training (Rimm & Masters, 1974). After the teacher-advisors have learned the basis of relationship building, it is essential that they learn to confront their advisees as well as act as an advocate for them. The final skill involves applying relationship building and assertion to large and small groups. It also involves an understanding of the stages of group development (Diedrich & Dye, 1972; Ohlsen, 1970), role functions of group members (Kemp, 1970) and skills needed by group leaders (Napier & Gershenfeld, 1973).

Relationship Building

Ivey (1971) defines a relationship by specific response categories of attending behaviors, reflection of feeling, and clarification of feeling. Ivey's training procedures involve the early and clear identification of non-verbal behaviors which enhance positive relationship building skills. In addition, he proposes a specific training model, micro-counseling, as a means of practicing the skills. The approach utilizes extensive video tape monitoring and feedback to the trainee. The authors have modified the procedures for training of advisors in groups. After watching models demonstrate high and low attending behavior,

the teacher-advisors practice short interviews with student volunteers for three to five minutes, trying to perform micro-counseling skills. Then, incidents of high and low levels of micro-counseling skills shown by the advisor are discussed, using video replay. Following this, observers recommend practicing a specific skill component such as head nodding, or leaning forward. Finally, there is a brief re-rum with the same volunteer practicing the recommended skill. Each teacher usually practices three to five times in the above manner. This training procedure is about eight hours long.

Carkhuff (1969) established scales describing levels of verbal and behavioral responses. These scales are derived from the "necessary and sufficient conditions" of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness as delineated by Rogers (1957). Carkhuff's training procedure was also modified in the present model by having advisors role play helping a student. Then the observers rate the responses of the advisor, using the five levels of the empathy scale. Later in the training session teachers are encouraged to present problems of close colleagues and eventually school problems related to their own roles. This total process involves approximately 10-15 hours of training.

Kagan (1972) uses a video tape feedback training method for assisting the trainee to better understand the interaction between participants by recognizing the impact each has on the other. In this approach teachers observe an actual advisee-advisor interview. After about 15 minutes a trained leader takes the place of the advisor who leaves the interview. Following this, for about 10

minutes the leader continues the interview by using the video reply to focus upon feelings and dialogue which significantly affects the prior interaction, while the group observes. Then, with new directions and insights achieved, the advisor resumes the session for approximately five minutes. Generally, this training segment requires approximately eight hours. This training session also enables the teacher-advisor to practice the micro-counseling and empathy training skills previously learned with an actual student.

Assertive Training

Assertive training techniques are, to a considerable degree, based upon the works of Wolpe (Wolpe, 1958, 1969). Assertive training involves expressing, verbally and behaviorally, positive or negative feelings through practice in roleplaying situations. After a brief overview of the nature of assertion, non-assertion and aggression, teachers-advisors identify school experiences in which it is somewhat difficult for them to express their feelings. Then pairs role-play these incidents and observers judge the responses as being aggressive, passive or assertive. The interactions are rehearsed until judged adequately assertive by the observers. At times, it is necessary to combine these procedures with systematic desensitization, (Wolpe & Lazarus 1966), if non-assertion, assertion, or aggression is accompanied by high anxiety. This group training session usually takes 8 to 10 hours.

Group Facilitation

Finally, the communication skills learned in the previous training sessions are extended to group settings, since teacher-advisors almost

always work with groups of students, both in their advisory capacity and in class.

Therefore, the next step in the training process is the application of the newly learned skills to groups, using the training group to practice this application. This training begins by the leader facilitating a structured group experience requiring much interaction (see resources section for examples of sources). This group experience is video taped and then replayed. Evidence from the tape which indicates various stages of group development are pointed out, as well as roles played by group members and by the leader. In this context the dynamics of group process are discussed, using mini-lectures to clarify major concepts. Next, each participant takes a turn at leading a mini-group in a structured experience of the participants own choosing. These sessions are debriefed, either from direct observation or by use of videotape. This instruction involves about 8 to 10 hours of training.

Resource Materials for Structured Techniques

The following materials the authors have found to be useful in developing the type of program described above. Obviously not all materials are appropriate for all grade levels, nor should they be used indiscriminately. This is certainly not to be considered a complete list of available materials; for example, many film strips and movies have recently appeared on the market. Additional materials can be found under various titles such as psychological education, humanistic education, affective education, and group methods.

Structured Activities

1. Gum, M.F., Smaby, N.H. & Tamminen, A. W. Developmental Guidance Experiences. Duluth, Minn: University of Minnesota, Duluth, Unpublished Manuscript, 1969. Since 1969 the staff and graduate students have been creating developmental guidance experiences (DGE) for classroom use at the elementary, secondary and college and agency settings. DGE's have as their theoretical base the Havighurst developmental theory, a humanistic viewpoint, and group theory. These structured experiences help students in meeting vital developmental needs. They are ways of accomplishing normal developmental tasks which all humans must master in the process of growing up, if they are to grow up as healthy, coping individuals.

2. Smaby, M. H., Gum, M. F., Tamminen, A. W. Classroom Guidance: An Introductory Approach to Humanistic Education . St.Paul, Minn.: Pupil Personnel Services, Minnesota Department of Education, 1973. A brief rationale of the DGE's is presented and 25 actual DGE's are presented in complete form for use in elementary and secondary levels.

3. Tamminen, A. W., Smaby, M.H., & Gum, M. F. Classroom Guidance for Human Growth. St. Paul, Minn.: Minnesota Department of Education, 1974. A booklet of structured DGE experiences that have been tested out in secondary classrooms. In this instance the DGE's were developed by or with teachers and are specifically related to subject matter areas.

4. Dinkmeyer, D. Developing Understanding of Self and Others. Circle Pines, Minn.: American Guidance Service, Publishers Building, 1970. Two DUSO kits have been developed for use at the elementary level with use of multimedia and puppets, etc. Bessell, H. & Palomeres, U., Methods in Human Development: Theory Manual. El Cajon, Calif.: Human Development Training Institute, 1971. A special tested curriculum for kindergarten through upper elementary. (Often referred to as the "magic circle"). Purpose is to foster a feeling of competence through developing self awareness, self confidence, and social understanding.

5. Simon, S., Howe, I., & Kirschenbaum, H. Values Clarification: A Practical Handbook of Strategies for Teachers and Students. New York: Hart, 1972. A very useful handbook full of strategies and techniques for teachers to use with students to help deal with values and helpful ways to promote student discussions.

6. Glasser, W. Schools Without Failure. New York: Harper & Row, 1969. An excellent exposition on how the school can eliminate failure. Also there is a section that provides methods and procedures that can be adapted into classroom discussion to improve the learning environment.

7. Freed, A.M. TA for ToTs. Sacramento, Calif.: Jalmar Press Inc. 1974. A book to be used with little children to deal with their concerns from the TA viewpoint.

8. Pfeiffer, J. W. & Jones, J. E. Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training. Iowa City, Iowa: University Associates Press, 1973. The authors have published various volumes of handbooks with structured group experiences for human relations training. Many of the experiences are useful for classroom groups but care must be used to select exercises since many are primarily used for sensitivity training.

9. Ojemann, R., Chownining, K. & Hawkins, A. A Teaching Program in Human Behavior and Mental Health. Cleveland: Educational Research Council of America, 1961. A pioneer in the development of affective education curricula, Ojemann in conjunction with many other authors has created several volumes of conveniently packaged learning experiences for teachers in grades K-6. The materials are to enable one to teach a "causal orientation toward human behavior and the social environment."

10. Satir, V. Peoplemaking. Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1972. An easy to read, practical and down to earth book that seeks to provide parents or professionals with ways to deal with family processes. The book deals with aspects of self worth, communication, and the rules and system of a family.

11. Gelatt, H.B., Vorenhorst, B., Carey, R., and Miller, G.T. Decisions and Outcomes. Princeton: College Entrance Examination Board, 1973. Two

volumes, a leader's manual, and a student workbook, are available. There are various exercises to be used to help students learn to more effectively make decisions.

Training Programs

1. Sprinthall, N. A., & Erickson, V. L. "Learning Psychology by Doing Psychology: Guidance Through the Curriculum." Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1974, 52 (6), 396-405. This is an excellent example of how counselor educators can work within the school setting and "give away" psychology. The authors also demonstrate how a cross-age helper system can be developed within a school.

2. Wittmer, J. & Loesch, L. "A Workshop for Facilitating teacher-student Communication." The School Counselor, 1974, 22, 100-106. The authors provide a step by step procedure in conducting a workshop involving teachers and students to promote more effective communication between them.

3. Gluckstern, N. R. "Training parents as drug counselors in the community." Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1973, 51 (9), 676-680. A 60 hour training program to train parents to become a community helper. This program could be used to train parents as well as teachers to be helpers.

4. Hartzell, R. E., Anthony, W. A., & Main, H. J. "The comparative effectiveness of human relations training for elementary student teachers."

Journal of Educational Research, 1973, 66 (1), 457-461. A program to help prospective teachers learn interpersonal skills in order that they may become more effective in human encounters, especially teacher-child and teacher-parent interactions. The program makes heavy use of the Carkhuff (1969) training model.

5. Kratochvil, D. W., Jones, G. B., & Ganschow, L. H. "Helping students to help themselves," The School Counselor, 1970, 17 (5), 376-383. A program called the "Personal Social Development Program" (PSDP) was created in which trained counselors or teachers can assist students to "---- progress through a self-instructional process of behavior assessment and modification". Thus students are assisted in being responsible for diagnosing their own problems and setting up goals and procedures to effect positive self-desired changes.

6. Gordon, T. Parent Effectiveness Training. New York: Wyden, 1970. A book to help parents become more effective in their dealings with children. Communication skills are provided and the author's emphasis is upon the "no-win---no-lose method".

7. Randolph, N., & Howe, W. Self Enhancing Education. Palo Alto: Educational Development Corporation, 1969. A program to improve achievement

of the unmotivated and the disadvantaged through promoting a feeling of self worth and self confidence as the result of a method called the "self-enhancing process."

8. Poteet, J. A. Behavior Modification: a practical guide for teachers. Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1973. A paperback geared to help teachers effectively develop a positive classroom environment.

9. Becker, W. C. Parents are Teachers: A Child Management Program. Champaign, Ill.: Research Press Company, 1971. A tested out, helpful, practical paperback designed to help parents learn to be more effective teachers of their children. In very simple, every day language the author helps parents learn to apply behavior modification concepts.

10. Ivey, A. B. Microcounseling: Innovation in Interview Training. Springfield, Ill.: Charles Thomas, 1971. A method of building skills in attending behavior as outlined in program described above.

11. Kegan, N. Influencing Human Interaction. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, Colleges of Education and Human Medicine, 1972. A program for the development of relationship building skills as outlined above.

12. Carkhuff, R. R. Helping and Human Relations, Vol. 1 & 2. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1969. A complete program for building relationships

skills using empathy scales referred to above.

Summary

In summary, the proposed model for training teacher-advisors is based on the assumption that tentative commitment to making school a more rewarding experience for all is the first step in starting an effective program. The way to build on that commitment is to help teachers learn specific skills and methods which have a high probability of working, thereby resulting in positive reinforcement. The proposed teacher-advisor training program involves 40 to 50 hours of instruction. Additional benefits from such a program are: transfer of the learnings to the classroom, closer relationships and cooperation among staff members in helping students, and student imitating the teachers' positive ways of relating to each other and to students.

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